

## Antonakos, Mike

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**From:** Harper, Annie <annie.harper@yale.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 4:18 PM  
**To:** LABTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of HB 5248

Please see below my testimony in support of HB 5248 - An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record.

To Co-Chairs Kushner and Porter, Ranking Members Sampson and Arora, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

I am a researcher in the Yale School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry where I conduct research into the financial problems of marginalized communities, including people with mental health problems and people with incarceration histories. Our research has found that the financial challenges that people face when reentering the community after incarceration create significant barriers to successful reentry. People often not only have no income to speak of, but have multiple debts, due to the ways in which incarceration interrupts a person's financial life, and the dearth of mechanisms that we have to help people keep their finances in order while incarcerated. They may also struggle to engage with their social networks. Social support is a strong predictor of successful reentry, but when a person is unable to contribute financially to that network, it can cause shame, tension and frustration, weakening those crucial bonds. In such circumstances, a job is a lifeline, offering a person who has paid their dues to society to rebuild their life and sustain their relationships. When person is unable to get a job, due to the layers of discrimination they face, including bans on employing people with criminal records and inability to get licensed for certain occupations, it makes it much more likely that their social networks will weaken, their financial situations will worsen, and their likelihood of recidivism will increase. Failure to find a job after incarceration also has a significant impact on health.

I strongly urge you to pass bill HB 5248 in order that people reentering their communities after incarceration have a fair chance to move on with their lives,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Annie Harper, PhD  
Program for Recovery and Community Health, Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine  
<https://campuspress.yale.edu/nhdebtmap/>